

Providence Wage Offer, Benefit Takeaways Are Holding Us Back



“After 10 meetings, Providence has not yet presented a wage proposal that addresses what it costs to live in Thurston County for our aides and other lower wage workers, or the outrageous disparity between the salaries of top executives and the average worker; or how certain job classes lag far behind their colleagues working at St. Peter and other healthcare institutions. In addition, our census has boomed with no corresponding increases in staffing, causing too often mandatory overtime.

Despite the profitability and financial health of Providence, they have so far failed to recognize and reward the great dedication and sacrifice of each of our members during this crisis. They have even proposed major benefit takeaways in the middle of the pandemic.

Ira Byock MD, the Founder/Chief Medical Officer of the Providence Institute for Human Caring, writes in his article Heroism and Hypocrisy — ‘If we are to authentically address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, we must cut the chains of margin-driven care and model the values we espouse. Only then will we be able to chart a course to a more healthy and equitable future.’ We need some real justice for caregivers and patients now.” **Wendy Katz, MSW Hospice**



“Wages are a really important part of our bargaining, and members have said pretty clearly how they feel about Providence’s pitiful proposal. I have heard ‘That

is a slap in the face’ and ‘Do they really expect us to agree to that?’ When we spoke at the table about the wage issues and presented data showing how far behind we are, Providence couldn’t deny the data, but said that people don’t work here for the money.

All of us would like to see a fair contract reached as soon as possible, but Providence has not shown they are serious. We need to stand together and do whatever it takes to get a good contract.”

Vikki Eckerson, Hospice RNCM

Update – Dec. 22, 2020

At our bargaining session last Thursday, our team took the initiative to move us towards an agreement and focus Providence’s attention on the need to improve their wage proposal, especially in the first year, by modifying our wage proposal in the first year by .5% and withdrawing our proposal for case manager pay. The team also proposed a modification of our proposal for no mandatory call/backup for Hospice by proposing a six-month “phase-in” period for that commitment.

Our next bargaining is Dec 30, and we expect a new proposal from management at that time.

Our Bargaining Team:

Murinda McCuller
LPN, HH

Cheryl Harper
LPN Clinical Coordinator, HH

Sophia Risorto
PT, HH

Judy Hickmann
PTA, HH

Deb Gorman
RN, HH, Shell St. Onge,
Bereavement Counselor,
Hospice

Sheila Drew
Hospice Aide, Hospice

Wendy Katz
MSW, Hospice

Cat Thomas
MSW, Hospice

Masami Hutchins
MSW, Hospice

Meghan Murphy
MSW, Hospice

Vikki Eckerson
RN, Hospice

Crystal Trabue
RN, Hospice

Andrea Hautala
RN, Hospice

Paul Catterson
RN, Hospice

Summary of bargaining as of December 10, 2020

Highlighted in red is a management proposed “takeaway” (eliminating or reducing a standard we have now). Our team is here to make improvements, not go backwards.

At our session on October 21, in the interest of getting to an agreement and focusing on issues of wages and staffing (elimination of mandatory call, mandatory OT and restricting weekend work), the team also made a big move: To withdraw our proposals on increasing PTO and EIB accruals and expansion of our “maintenance of benefits” if management would withdraw “takeaways” on PTO/EIB and maintenance of benefits. Management rejected that offer, but it still stands.

Union	Management
Wage Increases	
<p>Across-the-board wage increases 7% 8/31/2020 1.5% 2/28/2020 4% 8/31/2021 3.75% 8/31/2022 Contract expires 8/30/2023</p>	<p>Across-the-board wage increases 1% following ratification 1.5% 8/31/2021 1.25% 8/31/2022 1.25% 8/31/2023 Contract expires 8/30/2024</p>
<p>Other wage adjustments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New step 23 (8/31/2020) and step 25 (8/31/2021) • Double time after 12 hours • Case manager pay: \$1 per hour (effective 8/31/2021) • \$1 licensure pay for social workers • “Experience audit” and pay adjustment where new hires have come in at higher rates than current employees • Additional 2% (above the 9% increase) for job classes far behind market (RN, MSW, PTA) • 5% adjustment for materials mgt. tech • Schedulers to team assistant rate 	<p>Other wage adjustments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No to new steps, 2X after 12, case manager pay, “experience audit • 100% experience credit for all job classification for new hires • Additional 2% (above the 1%) for RN, PT, OT Speech Therapist, 2.5% for PTA and COTA Therapist 1/1/2021 and 1% for MSW; then additional 1.25 % 8/31/2022, then • 1.75% (above the 1.25% increase) for RN, PT, OT and Speech Therapist 8/31/2023 • “No” to adjustment for materials mgt. tech, schedulers to team assistant rate
<p>Differentials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From \$2.50 (RN/OT/PT/SLP) and \$2.25 (MSW/Counselor/HH aide) to \$3.00 • Night: \$3.50 (RN/OT/PT/SLP) and \$3.25 (MSW/Counselor/HH aide) to \$4.00 • Standby: From \$3.00 to \$4.25 • Preceptor: From \$1.00 to \$2.00 • Double time after 12 hours • Call back: From straight time to time and a half for being called back to work • Report pay (showing up for work and being sent home): From minimum of 3 hours to minimum of 4 hours. • Per diem pay from 10% to 15% premium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standby from \$3.00 to \$3.25 • Reduce weekend pay from 20% of regular pay to \$4.50 an hour. • Per diem pay from 10% to 15% premium
Improved Staffing and Quality of Care	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mandatory on-call or overtime – immediate for home health, 6-month phase in for hospice • Weekends worked by employees hired for specific weekend schedule • Caseload/workload maximums – if over maximum for one week, supervisor must take action to address • Daily adjustments to patient assignments based on mileage, acuity, new admits, recertification, meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No to union proposals on on-call, mandatory overtime, weekend work, caseloads, daily adjustments and additional FTEs. • Workload caseload issues will be “standing item” on agenda labor management committee. • Any daily caseload adjustments/reductions may be taken into account in productivity calculations.
Commitment to Organizational Equity and Inclusion	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening of non-discrimination language – include gender identity, genetic information, political ideology. Non-discrimination applies to all personnel actions. • Labor-Management development of program and monitoring of data to improve cultural competency, awareness of hidden bias and equity, throughout agency. • No retaliation for raising discrimination issues. • Accommodation of all religious practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of gender, gender identify, disability, genetic information to non-discrimination clause. • Labor management review of Employer policies regarding discrimination and harassment. • No retaliation for raising complaints of discrimination. • Rejected: non-discrimination for political ideology; application of non-discrimination to all personnel actions; Labor-Management development of equity, cultural competency and hidden bias program, training, data monitoring system; accommodation of all religious practices.
Secure and affordable health benefits and sick time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide maintenance of benefits: no increased costs or reduced benefits for the life of the contract • Improvement of PTO/EIB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate access to EIB • Increase accruals on PTO/EIB (to 2013 levels) • Easier access to health incentives to pay out-of-pocket costs (annual PCP visit and health risk assessment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No to maintenance of benefits. • Elimination of EIB and replacement with short term disability that pays 65% of income and is accessible after 7 days.
Expanded training and professional development opportunities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to up to \$5,250 annual tuition assistance (upfront money not reimbursement) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes to \$5,250 annual tuition assistance, reimbursement (as part of “package”).
Other improved working conditions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow members to donate vacation to the bargaining team • Add MLK Holiday • Increased restrictions on “shift rotation” (e.g. working evenings or nights when hired to work days) • Once PTO scheduled, only changed by mutual consent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No to vacation donation to team. • Weekend defined as starting 12:01AM not 8AM Saturday. • Once PTO scheduled, only changed by management in emergencies or by mutual consent.